



Australian Bureau of Statistics

2049.0 - Census of Population and Housing: Estimating homelessness, 2006

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Official ABS estimates of homelessness: 90,000 homeless people on 8 August 2006

Today is the first time the ABS has released official estimates of the prevalence of homelessness in Australia at the time of the 2001 and 2006 Censuses.

Today's release found that there were 89,728 people who were homeless on 8 August 2006, or 0.5% of the Australian population (45 homeless people for every 10,000 persons). Between 2001 and 2006 there was a 6% decrease in the number of people who were homeless (the rate of homelessness declined from 51 homeless people per 10,000 persons in 2001). The fall in the boarding house population (down 5,840) drove the overall decline in homelessness.

ABS's estimates of homelessness adopt the ABS definition of homelessness that was published on 4 September (*Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness* (cat. no. 4922.0)). Under the ABS definition, a person is homeless if they do not have suitable accommodation alternatives and their current living arrangement:

- is in a dwelling that is inadequate; or
- has no tenure, or if their initial tenure is short and not extendable; or
- does not allow them to have control of, and access to space for social relations.

ABS has developed a transparent, consistent and repeatable methodology for compiling estimates of the number of people enumerated in the Census who were likely to be homeless on Census night. The ABS methodology was published on 5 September (*Information Paper – Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing* (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001)). Estimates for Census night in 2011 will be released on 12 November 2012.

On Census night 2006 the rate of homelessness was highest in the Northern Territory (792 per 10,000 persons) and lowest in Tasmania (24 per 10,000 persons).

Most homeless people were not sleeping rough or in improvised dwellings - these people accounted for only 8% of all homeless persons. People living in severely crowded dwellings were the largest homeless group (35%), followed by people staying temporarily with other households (20%) or staying in supported accommodation for the homeless (19%).

At the time of the 2006 Census six in ten homeless people were aged under 35 years, and just over half were men (57%).

Today's publication also presents estimates of people who were not homeless but who were living in some form of marginal housing on Census night. These include people who may be at risk of homelessness. On Census night in 2006, there were 43,149 people (22 people per 10,000

persons) living in crowded dwellings just below the **severe** threshold of homelessness. There were another 7,724 people (4 people per 10,000 persons) living in improvised dwellings in a range of circumstances that do not meet the definition of homelessness, and 12,444 people (6 people per 10,000 persons) who were marginally housed in caravan parks.

For more information see today's publication *Census of Population and Housing: Estimating Homelessness, 2006* (cat. no. 2049.0), and both the *Information Paper - Methodology for Estimating Homelessness from the Census of Population and Housing* (cat. no. 2049.0.55.001) and *Information Paper - A Statistical Definition of Homelessness* (cat. no. 4922.0).

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